THE DIRECTOR.

No. 16. SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1807.

'Tis pleasant, through the loop-holes of retreat,
To peep at such a world.

COWPER'S *Task*, b. iv.

ABOUT three weeks ago, I was walking with my old friend SIR VICARY VELLUM, in the evening, from Cornhill towards Mr. King's, the auctioneer, near Covent Garden, to be present at a sale of prints, with the hope of procuring some *uniques*. While I was expatiating with my friend upon the beauties of the ancient engravers, Goltzius, Aldegrave, Passe, Cross, Marshall, Loggan, Stock, Vaughan, &c. he bade me, in a very sudden but serious manner, take notice

of the scene before me. 'Observe,' said he, 'the splendour of these shops; see with what elegant variety of articles each window is stored; look at yonder glass cutter's, and at this jeweller's; examine the perfection of workmanship in this steel ware: and, again, reflect how the wilds of Russia and of India have been explored for these hides of the bear and the leopard. Such are the blessings of industry, and of a well-directed commercial spirit.'

I CONFESS, though I had never before made similar reflections, I was struck with the justice of my friend's remark, and with the dazzling splendour of 'the scene before me.' It was approaching fast towards eight o'clock; the light of day had wholly retired; the street and patent shop-lamps began to burn; while the rattling of coaches, the glare of flambeaux, and the incessant motion of the people, hastening to their last rendezvous, produced on my mind a very extraordinary effect. My friend resumed, stopping me in the midst of the crowd, 'You

have here a very singular and impressive scene: those gay folks decorated with feathers, or armed with cocked hats, are hastening to the *fourth* act of the play, because they cannot leave their dinners time enough to be present at the *first*. At the hour when Edward III. was preparing for his supper, do his descendants think about their dinners. But,' continued he, 'on many accounts the streets of London are interesting in the *evening*. I have been at Paris, at Petersburgh, at Vienna, and at Berlin; and Europe has nothing like Cheapside or Fleet Street, to boast of. Cleanliness, civility, splendour, and excellence of manufactory, are all to be enjoyed here. You may be gratified with a diamond large enough for the turban of an Indian prince; you may command muslin of the finest texture; you may procure glass, cutlery, cloth, books, shoes, and hats, of all kinds, and of the finest quality—if you have only '*money in your purse.*' Moreover, to the eye of humanity, an evening in London may afford a still

more exquisite gratification. Think, I beseech you,' continued the Knight, while his voice faltered, and his action became tremulous, 'think of those good angels that go about, in the form of benevolent human beings, to succour the distressed, to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry. True it is, wickedness and seduction range uncontrouled; but virtue and charity are not yet quite shut out from the land. The poor wretch that is driven almost to madness by the wily arts of her fellow creatures, sometimes meets with protection in an asylum, of which, perhaps, she even doubted the existence. Keen and bitter is the blast of evening to her, who sits shivering on the pavement, and hides her face in obscurity; and loud and piercing are the cries of her little one, with scarcely a tattered garment to cover its tender limbs! But, ah! more keen and bitter are the pangs of that wretch who has brought her to such ignominy, and more loud and piercing will be, *one day*, his supplications for pardon!'

HERE my worthy old friend suppressed his narrative; tears streamed in abundance down his cheeks; and I was compelled to touch upon a different subject; and to drag him from a spot to which he had, for five minutes, been quite rivetted. 'These shops, Sir,' replied I, 'are indeed sumptuous and interesting; but your reflections have now cast a gloom over 'the scene before me.'

'Sir,' resumed the knight, 'we will change the subject; and, if you please, *abuse* the customs and fashions of the age.' By this time we had reached the corner of St. Paul's; and a number of people stopping for an opportunity to cross the way, a ballad singer and guitar player approached the crowd; and just as they were going to *strike up*, I found that I had been separated from my friend, whom no exertions could again recover. It was in vain, at such a time, and in such a place, to make inquiries: so I hastened home, and found lying on my table the following letters, which I

offer as a sort of supplementary extraordinary gazette to the foregoing narrative.

To the Editor of the Director.

SIR,

IT is now upwards of twelve years since I left London, to retire on a living in the country. As my living is situated at a very great distance from the metropolis, I have inflexibly adhered to a resolution of not going thither but on occasions the most urgent and peremptory. It has so happened, that, ever since I have been thus sequestered, no occasion for making this metropolitan visit has occurred. I have rigidly adhered to my plan, have invariably amused myself with the grand features of landscape before me, in this delightful part of England, on the confines of Lancashire and Westmoreland. When the weather permits, I take my morning or evening walk, with Horace, or Virgil, or, more frequently, Milton, or Jeremy Taylor, in my pocket.

Seated on a fragment of rock beneath the hardy mountain-ash, I see the sun set behind the hills; I inhale the balmy breezes of evening, or the spicy gales of the morning. All nature seems spread before me; and the magnificence of heaven and earth, thus wonderfully united, draws tears of transport from my eyes, and kindles within my breast the purest sentiments of gratitude towards NATURE'S GOD.

BUT, Sir, it has so happened, that my rural meditations have been a little interrupted, by the unremitting assiduities of my wife, my eldest son, and two daughters, to pay *a visit to the metropolis;* and the arguments adduced on the occasion, (with which I very cheerfully complied) are of a nature too singular to be withheld from you. 'You know, my dear, (observed this best of women) that our children now begin to approach a state of maturity. HENRY is not only past twenty-three, but has the prospect of a union with a young lady of no mean

connexions and fortune. It is fit that, in the furnishing of his house, he should be instructed by a *Walk in London.* SOPHIA, our eldest, is upwards of nineteen; and it is also fit, in case of *her* future matrimonial alliance, that she be instructed by a *Walk in London.*' As I well knew how tenacious mothers were about the management of the concerns of their children at the period of wedlock, and that the procuring of suitable furniture was an object of vast importance, on this occasion—and as, moreover, I really loved my wife too well to put a negative on the proposition, I readily acquiesced in her wishes, promising Henry, Sophia, and Elizabeth (the latter of whom is hardly fifteen) that they should accompany their mother within five days of the signing of the preliminary treaty.

THE treaty was instantly signed; and on the morning of the fifth day, I saw them all depart with merry hearts for the Metropolis. I cautioned my son, who was a Westminster lad, and had taken

his Batchelor's degree at Oxford, to be circumspect and prudent,; and to consider it his first duty to pay every attention to his mother and sisters.

On the fourth day of their arrival in town, my wife wrote to me the following epistle; which not inaptly describes a *Walk in London*. You will perceive, Sir, that she is a woman of plain good sense, and expresses her sentiments as she really feels them.

Dorant's Hotel,
Albemarle Street.

My dear Husband,

Since I wrote my last letter, which announced to you our safe arrival in this busy place, I have been constantly occupied, with our children, in parading the streets, and visiting the shops: many of the former have been wonderfully altered since we resided here. The neighbourhood of St. Clement's Church and Snow Hill, you would hardly recollect; on so vast and so judicious a scale have been the improvements! The streets

formed beyond Cavendish and Portman Squares, are, indeed, astonishingly numerous and beautiful: but, though the rents are in proportion, I understand they pay *no taxes* for all this beauty and magnificence. How shall I describe to you the improvements around Bloomsbury Square? The Duke of Bedford's house is no more; and in lieu of it, are sprung up many fine broad streets, and two noble squares. These are the leading features of improvement on *our* side of Temple Bar; of the *city*, I hear great things, but shall probably see nothing but the *Bank*, which I hope will always be, as you are wont to say, '*in statu quo.*' The West India and London docks will appear to posterity as places of fiction: so magnificent, and so various are the alterations.

But I must not withhold from you some singularities relating to the *shops* in London. The jutting bow windows and thick wooden frame work, are discarded; and in place of it, we have a smooth and

almost flat window, with thin mahogany or brass frames, and, in general, plate glass. The effect is very beautiful, and admirably calculated to display the several goods and merchandizes within, of which it is difficult to say whether silver, glass, steel, jewellery, Tunbridge ware, books, prints, mirrors, or millinery, excel. The *alteration* of the windows I much approve; because a poor man might accidentally have deprived his family of bread for a week, by breaking a square or two of glass, as the windows *originally* projected.

You will smile at my again mentioning the shops of haberdashers and milliners; but really I was astonished at the elegant appearance of the young women who stood behind the counters. Poor Sophia and Elizabeth were *quite Rustics* compared with them! A pendant curl, which they call a *love-lock*, something like the head-dresses of Vandyke and Lely, shades the forehead and almost obscures one eye; the hair is for-

mally braided; and rather *an apology for a cap* is stuck at the back part of the head. I saw Sophia look with surprise, and Eliza with a sort of admiration and respect: they both observed, on leaving the first shop into which we entered, that they did not expect to meet with *fine gentlewomen* serving behind the counter. I must confess I was not so much disgusted with the dress, which is sufficiently *airy*, as with the *manners* of some of these young ladies: that conceited air, that affectation of gentility, that unqualified stare and freedom of gesture, are quite insufferable!

But the *upholstery* and *furniture* shops are almost beyond conception. To some of these, there is an artificial grandeur of front, which reminds you of entering into an antient temple or theatre. Fluted columns, of the Tuscan, Doric, and Corinthian order, very frequently grace the porticos of some; while to others are affixed ornaments, which rather resemble the *heads of ships*, than the appropriate

decorations of a shop. You would think, from some of these entrances, that you were going to the inner apartment of a Spanish palace: when lo! out pops the master, from a mahogany sarcophagus, and importunes you to do him the favour of *running in debt*. His tables are round or oblong, and *mounted upwards*, reminding you, 'if small things may with great compare,' of Milton's description of Satan's enormous shield. Mahogany is getting quickly out of fashion, and wainscot has been long discarded: nothing now is seen but *Rose*, and *Sattin*, and *Botany Bay* wood. If you ask for an inkstand, a working table, or a celleret, you are sure to have something brought you, *à l'antique*, quite the reverse of what you were led to expect. Satyrs, fauns, monsters' heads, and animals of all kinds, come staring upon you in a most tremendous manner. My girls were surprised, and even alarmed: but Henry, who had obtained his ideas of ornament from Vitruvius, Inigo Jones, and Stuart, sat his arms a-kimbo and lustily railed at

such a ridiculous affectation of the *antique.*

THERE was some time ago, I understand, a prodigious rage for the *Egyptian.* Chintz and moreen furniture, carpets, mats, rugs; in short, every thing was doomed to this *monstrous* fashion. Men with birds' heads, and birds with men's heads, crocodiles, phinxes, and crows, were all dancing about the furnitture in the same ludicrous style that Junius metaphorically describes 'the masks and hatchets,' of Sir William Draper. But the rage stopped not here: chairs, tables, sofas, and sideboards were all touched by the talisman of this Egyptian magician! and obelisks and pyramids, besprinkled with hieroglyphics from top to bottom, ornamented the halls, dining rooms, and drawing rooms of our *Grand Seigneurs!* This mania, out of compliment I presume to the names of Nelson and Abercrombie, is now, however, confined within certain limits; and the wiser part begin to re-

flect, that, *the imitation of the arts in their rudest state*, neither contributes to just decoration, nor evinces a correct taste in those who adopt it.

A LITTLE time back, (I speak from the report of a very intelligent waiter in the hotel) the good shopkeepers had inscribed over their doors certain *odd-shaped letters*, which rendered it difficult to understand the trade carried on within. These letters were in imitation of those used in *Roman inscriptions*, so that you would think every upholsterer and haberdasher an adept in 'Montfaucon's Antiquité expliquée.' Perhaps it might chagrin these good folks to know how many rude, unlettered, country visitors, like myself, have carried their £.10 or £.20 to a different market. This rage has now almost wholly abated: it probably commenced in a frolic, and was gravely continued as a very sagacious custom. People now begin to have legible inscriptions, and to get more money in consequence.

A GREAT fashion at present prevails of making the exterior of a shop appear like a *marble portico:* and if you were to be set down from Lancashire, in the middle of Catherine Street, in the Strand, you would imagine yourself to be among the principal palaces at Rome.

VERD-ANTIQUE, and Sienna marble are brought, it would seem, at an expense incalculable, from Greece and Italy, to adorn the exterior of a linen-draper's or upholsterer's shop. The artist does certainly *his* part well; but the owner of the house might have probably got more credit by adhering to one simple colour of white or grey.

The only thing in addition which I have now time to mention is, the absurdity of decorating *carpet-rugs* and *mats* with monsters of the bird and beast kind. My daughter Eliza was, the other day, considerably alarmed by the appearance of a *gigantic tiger*, stretched out upon the watch for prey: she ran to

me, tremulously exclaiming, 'A wild beast, a lion!' On walking up firmly towards the monster, we found him as harmless as the lion described by Addison, in the opera of his day! Eagles and vultures are also worked on these rugs: objects, as ridiculous and inappropriate as can well be imagined!

But the 6 o'clock bell is ringing, and the postman waits at the door. Adieu.

Ever yours affectionately,

S. D.

Thus, Mr. Director, I have troubled you with my wife's '*Walk in London.*' If it can afford the least amusement, or be productive of the least correction of a perverted taste, I shall feel exceedingly gratified. In the mean time I cannot avoid remarking, that the character of the present day, in regard to the foregoing details, seems to be a thoughtless extravagance, unproductive of taste or utility. To get money rapidly, and to

spend it tastefully or wisely, are very different things. In general, common sense and appropriate ornament go hand in hand.

I SUPPOSE we shall soon be at the mercy of a fresh set of innovators, who, I understand, are coming home from Kamtschatka, and the Friendly Islands, with numerous drawings of all the fine and strange things they have seen in those parts of the world; so that we may shortly expect to behold an indian god, or a female warrior, grinning upon the posts of the principal shops in Bond Street. Whether these innovators are described in the new edition of 'The Ship of Fools,' I have not had an opportunity of examining. But I tire you with this long epistle; it is time to assure you,

Sir,

How truly I am yours,

RUSTICUS.

BIBLIOGRAPHIANA.

I AM not aware of the sale of any curious or elegant collection of books, since that of Dr. Rawlinson's, before the year 1764; when the collection of Sir Clement Cottrell Dormer was disposed of. The catalogue was published under the following title:

'A Catalogue of the genuine and elegant Library of the late

Sir C. C. DORMER,

Collected by Lieutenant General James Dormer; which will be sold, &c. by Samuel Baker, at his house in York Street, Covent Garden; to begin on Monday, February the 20th, 1764, and to continue the nineteen following evenings.' At the end of the catalogue we are told that the books were 'in general of the best editions, and in the finest condition, many of them in *large paper*, bound in morocco, gilt leaves, &c.'

THIS was a very choice collection of books, consisting almost entirely of

French, Greek, Latin, Italian, and Spanish. The number of articles did not exceed 3082, and of volumes, probably not 7000. The catalogue is neatly printed, and copies of it on *large paper* are exceedingly scarce. Among the most curious and valuable articles are the following:

No. 599. Les Glorieuses Conquestes de Louis le Grand, par Pontault, *en maroquin*. Paris. 1678.

N.B. In this copy, many very fine and rare portraits are added, engraved by the most eminent masters.

No. 604. Recueil des Maisons Royales, fort bien gravés par Sylvestre, &c.

N.B. In the book was the following note. '*Ce recueil des Maisons Royales n'est pas seulement complet, en toutes manières, mais on y a ajouté de plusieurs plans, que l'on ne trouvent que très rarement.*

No. 731. Fabian's Chronicle. 1559.

752. Hall's ditto. 1548.

751. Higden's Polychronicon. 1527.

I should suspect that Dr. Askew purchased the large paper Hutchinson's Xenophon, and Hudson's Thucydides. Nos. 2246, 2585.

No. 2249. Don Quixote, por Cervantes. Madr. 4to. 1605. In hoc libro hæc nota est. '*Cecy est l'edition originale; il y a une autre du mesme année, imprimée en quarto, a Ma-*

drid, mais imprimée apres cecy. J'ay veu l'autre et je les ay comparez avec deux autres editions du mesme année, 1605; *une imprimée a Lisbonne en* 4to. *l'autre en Valentia, en* 8vo.'

No. 2590. Thuanus by Buckley, on *large paper*, in 14 volumes, folio; a magnificent copy, illustrated with many beautiful and rare portraits of eminent characters, mentioned by De Thou.

From No. 2680 to the end of the catalogue (401 articles) there appears a choice collection of Italian and Spanish books.

WITHIN five years after the sale of Sir C. C. Dormer's books, was sold the collection of

ROBERT HOBLYN, ESQ.

The title to the catalogue is as follows: 'Bibliotheca Hoblyniana; sive Catalogus Librorum, juxta exemplar, quod manu sua maxima ex parte descriptum reliquit Robertus Hoblyn, Armiger, de Nanswidden, in comitatu Cornubiæ. Londini, apud J. Murray. MDCCLXIX.'

Few catalogues contain a more sensible

and useful collection of books, or are more judiciously compiled, than the above. The 'Tituli Generales' immediately follow the title page, and are well deserving of notice by those who are busied in the formation or arrangement of libraries. The order is lucid, and the *general heads* do not exceed *eighteen* in number. The catalogue is very neatly printed, on excellent paper, in two parts, or volumes, containing in the whole 650 pages. A head of Hoblyn is usually prefixed; and large paper copies are nearly as common as small.

I AM now, in the chronological order of booksales, to notice a collection of books, in ENGLISH LITERATURE, which for their rarity and value, in a proportionate number, have never been equalled; I mean the library of

JAMES WEST, ESQ.

President of the Royal Society.

The sale commenced on March 29, 1773, and continued for the twenty-three following days. The catalogue was digested

by SAMUEL PATERSON, a man, whose ability in such undertakings has been generally allowed. The title was as follows:

'BIBLIOTHECA WESTIANA; A Catalogue of the curious and truly valuable library of the late James West, Esq. President of the Royal Society, deceased: comprehending a choice collection of books in various languages, and upon most branches of polite literature: more especially such as relate to the history and antiquities of Great Britain and Ireland; their early navigators, discoverers, and improvers, and the *ancient English literature*: of which there are a great number of uncommon books and tracts, elucidated by MS. notes and original letters, and embellished with scarce portraits and devices, rarely to be found: including the works of CAXTON, LETTOU, MACHLINIA, the anonymous St. ALBANS schoolmaster, WYNKYN DE WORDE, PYNSON, and the rest of the old English typographers. Digested by

SAMUEL PATERSON, and sold by Messrs. Langfords.

The title page is succeeded by the

PREFACE.

'THE following catalogue exhibits a very curious and uncommon collection of printed books and tracts: of British History and Antiquities, and of *rare old English Literature*, the most copious of any which has appeared for several years past; formed with great taste, and a thorough knowledge of authors and characters, by that judicious critic and able antiquary, the late JAMES WEST, Esq. President of the Royal Society.'

'SEVERAL anonymous writers are herein brought to light—many works enlarged and further explained by their respective authors and editors—and a far greater number illustrated with the MS. notes and observations of some of our most respectable antiquaries; among whom will be found the revered names of Camden, Selden, Spelman, Somner, Dugdale, Gibson, Tanner, Nicolson,

Gale, Le Neve, Hearne, Anstis, Lewis, St. Amand, Ames, Browne, Willis, Stukely, Mr. West, &c. But, above all, the intense application and unwearied diligence of the admirable BISHOP WHITE KENNETT, upon the ecclesiastical, monastical, constitutional, and topographical history of Great Britain, so apparent throughout this collection, furnish matter even to astonishment; and are alone sufficient to establish the reputation, and to perpetuate the memory, of that illustrious prelate, without any other monuments of his greatness.'

'IN an age of general inquiry, like the present, when studies less interesting give place to the most laudable curiosity and thirst after investigating every particular, relative to the history and literature of our own country; nothing less than an elaborate digest of this valuable library could be expected; and, as a supplement to the history of English literature, more desired.'

'That task the Editor has cheerfully undertaken: and, he flatters himself, executed as well as the short time allowed would permit. He further hopes, to the satisfaction of such who are capable of judging of its utility and importance.'

'THE lovers of engraved English portraits (a species of modern connoisseurship which appears to have been first started by the late noble EARL of OXFORD, afterwards taken up by Mr. West, Mr. Nicolls, editor of Cromwell's State-Papers, Mr. Ames, &c. and since perfected by the Muse of Strawberry-Hill, the Rev. Wm. Granger, and some few more ingenious collectors) may here look to find a considerable number of singular and scarce heads, and will not be disappointed in their search.'

S. P.

(An account of the books will appear in the next number.)

Royal Institution.

For the subject of his *fifteenth* lecture Mr. Crowe took those dramas which have been composed to ridicule theatrical productions. He shewed how this was done by the contemporaries of Shakspeare. He gave an account of the Poetaster of B. Jonson, and the Satyromastix of Dekker, which was a reply to the former. He remarked upon their grossness and personalities. The Rehearsal was the next subject of the lecturer's notice; when he observed, that its noble author had neglected the fair opportunity which presented itself of censuring the immorality and profaneness of the stage at that period.

The pieces of a similar kind, which succeeded the Rehearsal, were then examined, and their respective merits were stated: and upon a general review of those satirical dramas, the lecturer concluded, that they appeared to have some-

times improved our theatre in matters of taste, but to have had no higher object. He observed, that this species of satire, like comedy, grew more refined, as it proceeded; and that the latter pieces of this description ridiculed the faults of dramatic writers, without outraging their feelings, by any asperity of language, or breach of good manners.

British Gallery.

No. 179. Thatching a Mill.

James Ward.

THIS is a very spirited little picture, touched in a forcible and scientific manner: but *too much* is attempted within so small a compass. The splendid sunset might have been judiciously omitted. The purple and yellow preponderate too much.

No. 186. The Plasterer. J. Cranch.

THIS beautiful cabinet picture would

have been overlooked by an eye less scientific than the purchaser's. The colouring is in a quiet cool style, and the touch admirable. The scene appears to be a perfect representation of the interior of some shattered but picturesque cottage.

Purchased by Captain Ansley.

No. 193. A Landscape with Cattle; Evening. Miss F. Reinagle.

WHETHER the height at which this painting of Miss Reinagle's is hung, be exclusively the cause of the effect produced, it would be fastidious to inquire: certain it is, that this effect is an *excellent one*; and that the composition and colouring betray no ordinary powers of execution in the fair artist.

No. 198. Inside of a Stable.
209. Old Peasant at a Cottage Door.
Both by Westall.

THESE are painted as companions, and are very pleasing little cabinet pic-

tures. The tone of colouring is in a quiet, temperate style, and the touch masterly.

THE former *purchased by Lady Lucas*; the latter by *Sir A. Hume, Bart.*

No. 201. A Scene from Nature, Sussex.
J. Hammond.

IF ever there was a picture painted without trick or affectation, this is one. The figures and houses are appropriately grouped, and the colouring is exceedingly clear and natural. Such scenes as these, bring nature immediately before the eye; and gratify, by their simplicity, more than roaring cataracts, and tempestuous skies.

Purchased by Lord Ashbrook.

No. 212. View near Canterbury.
J. Laporte.

A PLEASING well executed little picture: the atmosphere is clear, and the effect perfectly natural.

No. 297. Moonlight scene.
G. Arnold.

Mr. ARNOLD has here executed a very difficult composition with great spirit and truth. The bridge and surrounding trees, with the gleam of moonlight in the running stream beneath, and the contending glare of a lime kiln, are all faithfully and pleasingly represented. The scenery is romantic.

Purchased by the Marquis of Stafford.

No. 297. A Landscape and Windmill.
S. W. Reynolds.

A GRAND picture: the shades are broad and deep; and the light is produced with an effect, such as we see in Rembrandt's best compositions. The general tone of colouring is of a bluish black; though there is an equal degree of warmth and coolness scattered about the picture.

Purchased by Mr. Guillemard.

Published by LONGMAN, HURST, REES, and ORME, Paternoster Row; J. HATCHARD, Bookseller to Her Majesty, 190, Piccadilly; and WILLIAM MILLER, Albemarle Street.

William Savage, Printer, Bedford Bury.